

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-15. (canceled).

Claim 16. (previously presented) A method for transmitting data from a source network device to a destination network device, the method comprising the steps of:

assigning the data, via the source network device, a fictitious hardware address as destination address, the fictitious hardware address being a hardware address information item which the source network device uses, based on a transfer protocol used, to identify a transmission destination without matching a manufacturer-prescribed hardware address of the transmission destination;

transmitting the fictitious hardware address from the source network device to an address conversion apparatus;

checking, via the address conversion apparatus, whether the transmitted fictitious hardware address matches a stored fictitious hardware address stored in a memory of the address conversion apparatus;

assigning the data an address information item, if a result of the check is positive, which is associated with the transmitted fictitious hardware address in the address conversion apparatus;

identifying, via the address information item, the destination network device ; and

using the address information item to forward the data to the destination network device.

Claim 17. (previously presented) A method for transmitting data from a source network device to a destination network device as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the address

information item assigned to the data is a real hardware address for the destination network device.

Claim 18. (previously presented) A method for transmitting data from a source network device to a destination network device as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the address information item assigned to the data is a network address for the destination network device.

Claim 19. (previously presented) A method for transmitting data from a source network device to a destination network device as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the fictitious hardware address used as the destination address is formed by the address conversion apparatus and is transmitted to the source network device.

Claim 20. (previously presented) A method for transmitting data from a source network device to a destination network device as claimed in Claim 16, the method further comprising the steps of:

answering an inquiry from the source network device, after a hardware address for a network device identified by an address information item contained in the inquiry, by the address conversion apparatus; and

transmitting to the source network device via the address conversion apparatus, a fictitious hardware address associated with the address information item in question.

Claim 21. (previously presented) A method for transmitting data from a source network device to a destination network device as claimed in Claim 20, wherein the address information item contained in the inquiry is a network address.

Claim 22. (previously presented) A method for transmitting data from a source network device to a destination network device as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the hardware address is an MAC address.

Claim 23. (previously presented) A method for transmitting data from a source network device to a destination network device as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the data are transmitted from the source network device to the destination network device via the address conversion apparatus.

Claim 24. (previously presented) A method for transmitting data from a source network device to a destination network device as claimed in Claim 23, wherein the data are converted in the address conversion apparatus in line with a transfer protocol used by the destination network device.

Claim 25. (previously presented) An address conversion apparatus for converting fictitious hardware addresses into address information items identifying at least one destination network device, the fictitious hardware address being a hardware address information item which a source network device uses, based on a transfer protocol used, to identify a transmission destination without matching a manufacturer-prescribed hardware address of the transmission destination, the apparatus comprising:

- an association table memory in which at least one fictitious hardware address is stored associated with a respective address information item which identifies a destination network device;

- an address checking device for checking whether a fictitious hardware address coming from the source network device matches a fictitious hardware address stored in the association table memory; and

- an address determination device for determining the address information item associated with a fictitious hardware address which comes from the source network device and is stored in the association table memory.

Claim 26. (previously presented) An address conversion apparatus as claimed in Claim 25, further comprising:

an address assignment device for assigning data which come from the source network device and are associated with a respective fictitious hardware address to an address information item associated with the respective fictitious hardware address in the association table memory.

Claim 27. (previously presented) An address conversion device as claimed in claim 26, further comprising a protocol conversion apparatus for converting the data coming from the source network device in line with a transfer protocol used by the destination network device.

Claim 28. (previously presented) An address conversion apparatus as claimed in claim 25, further comprising a device for forming fictitious hardware addresses to be used as destination addresses.

Claim 29. (previously presented) An address conversion apparatus as claimed in claim 25, further comprising an address resolution device for answering inquiries from the source network device after a hardware address for a network device, which is identified by an address information item contained in the inquiry, by looking up the fictitious hardware address associated with the address information item in the association table memory and transmitting it to the source network device.

Claim 30. (previously presented) An address conversion device as claimed in one claim 25, further comprising a part for entering address information items into the association table memory.